

Overview of Judging Calls for the 2016 iGEM Jamboree

Each call began by going through the miniFAQ document. After discussing that, the call was opened for Q&A. The questions asked (and the corresponding answers) are detailed below.

- **Went through the miniFAQ document posted on the iGEM Judging page (same place as the Handbook is posted):**
 - Handbook and miniFAQ is posted here: <http://2016.igem.org/Judging/Handbook>
 - Rubric is posted here: <http://2016.igem.org/Judging/Rubric>
 - You should judge every part of the rubric that is open for each team!
- **Other important points of interest:**
 - Please avoid specifying team names on any form of social interaction (or Slack) -- doing so might induce a bias or conflict of interest
 - For any questions you may have during the Jamboree, you have several options:
 - Come talk to the EJC at the Exec. Judging Committee table in judging room
 - Email the EJC directly
 - Communicate through Slack channel
- **How to prepare yourself for the Jamboree:**
 - Look at wikis.
 - Get used to the dashboard
 - How much time? It depends, but ideally ~30 min per team
 - Nothing is fixed in the dashboard, so you can always change things later
 - Take notes and note down any questions you have for teams -- it will make the judging task much easier
- **Question: If there are issues with part submissions or putting info on the Registry, what do we do?**
 - This year, there is a “**send by**” parts deadline (distinct from the wiki freeze deadline)
 - Teams need to put tracking number for their sample into the Registry by that date
 - Most DNA will arrive at HQ after the Jamboree
 - For any teams that you are considering for “Best Part” awards, those parts need to arrive at iGEM HQ, or the award may be rescinded
 - All teams ship their DNA to iGEM HQ, except for Chinese teams -- they send their DNA to Genscript in Nanjing
 - Overall, we’re being more lenient on part submission this year
 - There IS a new standard this year: PhytoBricks -- this is the accepted standard for plant-based parts. See here for more information:
http://2016.igem.org/Resources/Plant_Synthetic_Biology/PhytoBricks

- **Question: Questions in ballots will be set up based on the category the team is in, including special awards -- correct?**
 - Yes, only if a team has nominated themselves for an award will that part of the ballot be visible.
 - You just need to fill out the parts of the ballot that are visible! You don't have to worry about anything else! There is also color-coding to help you figure out what you need to fill out.
 - **Be sure to fill out as much of the ballot as is visible -- if you leave something blank, you may render a team ineligible for a prize**
 - If a team has not selected themselves for an award, judges cannot render the team eligible. There is no mechanism for this action to happen as award eligibility is entirely up to the team at the time of the judging form submission.
 - As a point of reference, 268/274 teams completed the judging form by the deadline.

- **Question: I'm a new judge. You mentioned that each judge will have up to 12 teams -- how much time does it take to evaluate the teams (both in-person time and outside and filling out the dashboard)?**
 - It depends on the team. Some teams have a lot to read on the wiki, and some wikis are better organized than others (hence all the static links on the judging form).
 - Presentation takes just the presentation time.
 - Poster discussions could take a few minutes, or up to 20-30 minutes depending on how interesting the discussion is.
 - At the Jamboree it's not too much work -- you'll definitely be able to finish everything in time.
 - Pre-Jamboree, you can start voting. Your votes aren't "permanent" until Sunday at 9 pm, so if you change your mind, you can change your votes later!
 - Once you get your assignments, start looking at the wikis. Take notes, jot down questions on what's unclear.
 - Start by focusing on the Project and Wiki sections of the ballot.
 - Actually casting the votes doesn't take long once you have an idea of team quality -- maybe 10-15 minutes, including typing comments
 - HQ recommends spending ~30 minutes per wiki before the Jamboree. With the static page links, should cut down significantly on time it takes to go through it.
 - You will be assigned a maximum of 4 sessions, with a max of 3 teams per session → max 12 teams per judge. Note there are 12 total presentation sessions, so you will have time during the Jamboree to work on judging and reading wikis, etc.

- **Question: How much of the judging process do the teams know/should know/not know about?**
 - First, no social media about the specific teams -- it can lead to the impression of bias in the judging. You can write about how excited you are to judge!
 - We are open and honest with the results of the judging -- they will be published online afterwards.

- You can talk about the process with teams/students, but the discussions that you have with other judges should remain confidential.
 - Includes post-presentation session discussions and discussions at judging meetings
- Also, rubric questions (items) are public, but the language scales should remain confidential -- we want teams to achieve to the highest level they can, and not just to a specific level we describe
- On your ballot, there is a place for a positive comment and a constructive criticism. This gives you a direct mechanism for you to give feedback to the teams. Teams really appreciate this.
- Teams also appreciate it a lot when you see them at the poster and you give them verbal feedback.
- **Note on High School teams:**
 - It's really important to think very carefully about what you say to the high school students.
 - We've witnessed professors deploying "super critical academic comments" to high school students, and we generally feel that that is inappropriate, since HS iGEM may be one of the seminal transformative moments in their lives, where they might decide whether or not to go into science as a career
- **Question: Which tools are best to use?**
 - To connect with other judges, use Slack
 - Guidebook app -- has schedule and other important Jamboree information (like maps, etc), you can create a personal schedule
 - You will need to enter your own teams into your Guidebook schedule
 - Not a communication tool
 - Must access dashboard through browser
 - Best to use a tablet or a laptop
 - Cell phone will be a bit small
 - Amazon Fire tablets don't work right (the Silk browser is weird), but most other tablets should be fine
- **Question: When provide feedback to teams at poster session, do we give general feedback or specific judging feedback?**
 - Should keep things more general -- suggestions for improvement, what they're doing well, etc. But try to avoid feedback on specific judging aspects.
 - The students will ask more problem-related questions, anyway
 - If you're talking to a team at their poster that's not one of your assigned teams, best to tell them that you're not one of their judges
- **Question: Referring to wikis -- where do we access those?**
 - They are accessible through the dashboard, which can be accessed through any major browser (except Amazon Silk) -- there will be a link directly to the wikis through the dashboard
 - Judging dashboard -- you will have access to that on Thursday

- **Question: Is the rubric scoring done separately on wiki/presentation/poster or combined?**
 - There are separate categories for Project, Wiki, Presentation, Poster, etc.
 - Before the Jamboree, you can go ahead and start working on the Project and Wiki sections

- **Question: Schedule is not clear. Where can I get a summary of the Judging schedule?**
 - Schedule posted on iGEM website on miniFAQ, and there will be reminders at the Jamboree

- **Question: What is the current standard for parts?**
 - iGEM requires parts to be submitted such that they are compatible with the original assembly standard, RFC10: <http://parts.igem.org/Help:Standards/Assembly>
 - For the most part, teams do not use this standard when cloning (many teams use more modern cloning methods like Golden Gate, etc, or they simply order their parts to be manufactured synthetically). However, they must still submit parts that are compatible with this standard!
 - The only exceptions are special parts like Phytobricks or mammalian-compatible bricks. These will be noted as “approved exceptions” (or there will be some sort of note about it).
 - Vinoo will have all of the details on this topic at the Jamboree